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HP Docket No. 200209031-1

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Original) A method of printing user-selected ones of a collection of images, comprising:

- printing a plurality of proof sheets each having a thumbnail representation of at least some of the images, and at least one user-markable field indicative of at least one corresponding image when marked;
- optically scanning a plurality of user-marked ones of the proof sheets to detect marked ones of the at least one user-markable field;
- processing the marked ones of the fields to determine at least one selected image associated with each scanned proof sheet; and
- printing the at least one selected image after the plurality of user-marked proof sheets have been scanned.

2. (Currently amended) ~~The method of claim 1, wherein the processing includes determining~~ A method of printing user-selected ones of a collection of images, comprising:

- printing a plurality of proof sheets each having a thumbnail representation of at least some of the images, and at least one user-markable field indicative of at least one corresponding image when marked;
- optically scanning a plurality of user-marked ones of the proof sheets to detect marked ones of the at least one user-markable field;
- processing the marked ones of the fields to determine at least one selected image associated with each scanned proof sheet and a print count associated with each selected image;

and

HP Docket No. 200209031-1

printing the at least one selected image after the plurality of user-marked proof sheets have been scanned, wherein the printing includes:

determining identical ones of the selected images;

summing the print counts of the identical selected images to form a total print count T;

and

printing T copies of one of the identical selected images.

3. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein the print count is a print count P, the method including:

printing P copies of each non-identical one of the selected images.

4. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein the at least one user-markable field is further indicative of a print characteristic associated with at least one of the images;

wherein the processing includes processing the marked ones to identify at least one specified print characteristic associated with at least one of the selected images; and

wherein the determining includes determining identical ones of a combination of the selected images and the associated specified print characteristics.

5. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein the printing T copies includes:

rendering the one of the identical selected images once to form a rendered image; and

printing the rendered image T times.

6. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein the images are digitally stored images, and wherein the proof sheet includes at least one identity marker capable of locating each digitally stored image.

HP Docket No. 200209031-1

7. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein the processing includes forming a print job, the method comprising:

storing the print job in a memory.

8. (Original) The method of claim 2, comprising:

determining a printing cost associated with printing the at least one selected image; and
inhibiting the printing if the printing cost exceeds a user-specified maximum cost.

9. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein at least some individual ones of the plurality of proof sheets are indicative of a same subset of the images.

10. (Original) A method of printing user-selected ones of a collection of images, comprising:

printing a plurality of proof sets, each set including a proof sheet having

thumbnail representations of at least some of the images,

at least one user markable print characteristic field associated with at least one of the thumbnail representations, and

at least one user-markable print count field associated with at least one of the thumbnail representations;

optically scanning at least some of the proof sheets to detect user-marked ones of the print characteristic fields and print count fields;

processing the user-marked ones to determine selected images, and further to associate at least one print characteristic and a print count with each selected image, each selected image and associated print characteristics forming a print specification;

determining identical ones of the print specifications;

summing the print counts associated with all of the identical ones to form a total print count T; and

HIP Docket No. 200209031-1

printing T copies of the selected image associated with the identical ones in accordance with the associated print characteristics.

11. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein each of the plurality of proof sets represents the collection of images.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein each proof sheet in one of the proof sets represents a unique subset of the collection of images, and wherein each individual proof sheet in the one proof set represents the same images as another individual proof sheet in each other proof set.

13. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the printing a plurality of proof sets includes printing on each proof sheet an event identifier associated with the proof set.

14. (Original) The method of claim 11, comprising:
associating a user identifier with one of the plurality of proof sets.

15. (Original) The method of claim 14, wherein the user identifier is unique for each proof set.

16. (Original) The method of claim 14, comprising:
printing a summary sheet indicative of the print count and at least some of the print characteristics for each selected image associated with each user identifier.

17. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein the print characteristic is at least one of print size, paper type, and media marking substance.

HP Docket No. 200209031-1

18. (Withdrawn) A method of printing user-selected ones of a collection of images, comprising:

- printing a proof sheet having
 - a thumbnail representation of at least some of the images,
 - at least one user-markable print characteristic field associated with at least one of the thumbnail representations, and
 - at least one maximum cost field;
- optically scanning the proof sheet to detect user-marked ones of the fields;
- processing the user-marked ones to determine selected images, to associate at least one print characteristic with each selected image, and to determine a maximum cost; and
- determining a printing cost associated with printing the selected images in accordance with the associated print characteristics.

19. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 18, comprising:

- printing the selected images in accordance with the associated print characteristics if the printing cost is less than or equal to the maximum cost.

20. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 18, comprising:

- adjusting the print characteristics if the printing cost is greater than the maximum cost so as to reduce the printing cost to less than or equal to the maximum cost; and
- printing the selected images in accordance with the adjusted print characteristics.

21. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 18, comprising:

- proposing adjustments to the print characteristics if the printing cost is greater than the maximum cost, the adjustments configured to reduce the printing cost; and
- printing the selected images in accordance with the adjusted print characteristics upon acceptance of the proposed adjustments.

IIP Docket No. 200209031-1

22. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 20, wherein each print characteristic represents a setting for an associated print parameter, wherein the proof sheet includes at least one user-markable minimum acceptable setting field, wherein the processing includes determining a minimum acceptable setting for the associated print parameter, and wherein the adjusting includes assigning the associated print parameter an adjusted setting that is equivalent to or better than the minimum acceptable setting.

23. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 20, wherein the proof sheet includes at least one user-markable priority field associated with a corresponding print characteristic, wherein the processing includes determining a priority for each corresponding print characteristic, and wherein the adjusting includes adjusting lesser priority print characteristics before adjusting greater priority print characteristics.

24. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 18, wherein the maximum cost is a total cost for all the selected images.

25. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 18, wherein the maximum cost is an average cost per selected image.

26. (Withdrawn) A method of printing user-selected ones of a collection of images, comprising:

printing a proof sheet having a thumbnail representation of at least some of the images and at least one user-markable print characteristic field, each field associated with at least one of the images;

optically scanning the proof sheet to detect user-marked ones of the at least one user-markable print characteristic field;

HP Docket No. 200209031-1

processing the user-marked ones to determine selected images and at least one print characteristic associated with each selected image so as to form a print job; and
storing the print job in a memory.

27. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 26, comprising:
printing the selected images in accordance with the print job.

28. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 27, comprising:
retaining the stored print job in the memory for a specified period of time.

29. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 26, wherein storing the print job comprises:
rendering image data for each selected image according to the associated print characteristics; and
storing the rendered image data for all the selected images in a print job file.

30. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 26, wherein storing the print job comprises:
rendering image data for each selected image according to the associated print characteristics; and
storing the rendered image data for each selected image in a different rendered image file.

31. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 26, wherein storing the print job comprises:
storing an identifier for each selected image in a print job file; and
storing the print characteristics associated with each selected image in the print job file.

32. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 26, wherein:
the proof sheet includes at least one user-markable stored job field,

HP Docket No. 200209031-1

the scanning includes detecting user-marked ones of the at least one user-markable stored job field,

the processing includes determining at least one stored job parameter, and

the storing includes storing the print job as specified by the at least one stored job parameter.

33. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 32, wherein each at least one user-markable stored job field is selected from the group consisting of a storage mode field, and a retention time field.

34. (Withdrawn) A multifunction printer, comprising:

a printer subsystem configured to print selected images from an image collection and a plurality of proof sheets associated with the image collection, each proof sheet including thumbnail representations of a same subset of the image collection and at least one field user-markable to select at least one of the images for printing;

an optical scanner subsystem configured to scan user-marked ones of the proof sheets so as to form scan data indicative of the selected images; and

a processing arrangement coupled to the printer subsystem and the optical scanner subsystem, the processing arrangement configured to

process the scan data to identify the selected images and determine a number of print copies associated with each selected image, and

control the printer subsystem to print the number of copies of each selected image.

35. (Withdrawn) The printer of claim 34, wherein the processing arrangement is further configured to generate a print job indicative of the selected images and the number of print copies, the printer further comprising:

a mass storage device coupled to the processing arrangement and configured to store the print job.

HP Docket No. 200209031-1

36. (Withdrawn) The printer of claim 34, wherein the processing arrangement is further configured to identify a user-specified maximum printing cost and print the copies of the selected images for less than or equal to the maximum printing cost.

37. (Withdrawn) A printing system, comprising:

means for printing a proof sheet having thumbnail representations of images and at least one user-markable field for selecting at least one of the images;

means for analyzing each marked proof sheet to determine the selected images, and a print count for each of the selected images;

means for determining identical ones of the selected images;

means for summing the copy counts for the identical images to form a total print count T;

and

means for printing T copies of one of the identical images.

38. (Withdrawn) The printing system of claim 37, wherein the means for printing T copies comprises:

means for forming a rendered image; and

means for printing the rendered image T times.

39. (Withdrawn) The printing system of claim 37, comprising:

means for specifying a maximum printing cost; and

means for printing the selected images at a cost less than or equal to the maximum printing cost.

40. (Currently amended) A method of printing subsets of images selected from a collection of images, comprising:

IIP Docket No. 200209031-1

identifying the images in the collection;

printing ~~at least one~~ a plurality of proof sets, each proof set including a proof sheet having a thumbnail representation of each image and at least one user-markable field associated with at least one of the thumbnail representations;

distributing each proof set to a different user, each user marking desired ones of the fields so as to define one of the subsets;

retrieving the user-marked proof sets;

optically scanning the proof sheets of the retrieved proof sets to detect the user-marked fields;

processing the user-marked fields to determine the images in the subsets;

collating the subsets ~~so as to~~ determine, for each image, a corresponding number of copies to be printed according to a particular set of print characteristics; and

after the collating, printing the corresponding number of copies of each image according to the corresponding particular set of print characteristics.

41. (Original) The method of claim 40, comprising:

printing a summary sheet indicative of the images in each individual subset; and

distributing the printed copies of the images to the users in accordance with the summary sheet.

42. (Original) The method of claim 40, wherein the printing comprises:

rendering the image once to form a rendered image; and

printing the rendered image the corresponding number of times.